

# Voters Reject Sewer Treatment Proposal

Article 35, one of two articles concerning the proposed sewage treatment facility, was defeated at Monday's session of the annual town meeting after a debate which lasted until midnight.

The article, which requested residents to transfer a 10-acre parcel of land bounded by the South Shore Music Circus and Smith Place to be used as the site of the treatment plant, was defeated 246 to 113.

Article 36 was discussed in conjunction with Article 35 and requested \$235,000 for

plans for a system of main drains and sewers to be extended to various areas of town. Town Counsel J. Blake Thaxter ruled the article couldn't be voted on, as the previous article's defeat left the facility without a site.

John Hobbs, chairman of the Board of Water Commissioners, presented the articles and discussed the long history of Cohasset's sewer studies. He also described the town's need for additional facilities.

According to Hobbs, at least 10 studies of sewers and

## Monday T.M. Meeting

pollution since 1906 up to the present Metcalf and Eddy proposal, have been undertaken in Cohasset. Every study recommended positive sewer action, Hobbs said, but it wasn't until 1968 when the present treatment facility was built that any action was taken. That plant treats 72,000 gallons per day serving 175

customers made of up residences, businesses and the Junior-Senior High School.

The plant now discharges a poor quality effluent, Hobbs said. The plant is overloaded and the state has mandated that no more hookups can be permitted. Tests of water around town show a pollution problem, he said. The federal Environmental Protection Agency has given Cohasset a time schedule to follow in developing an additional treatment facility — Cohasset is on the EPA's priority list because the agency perceives a need, Hobbs said.

Hobbs explained that passage of the articles meant a site had been approved and more plans for the facility would be drawn before the town meeting was asked for permission to begin construction.

Thomas Hintz, project engineer for Metcalf and Eddy, recommended extended sewerage to the Hillside area

of town, the veterans project and portions of Route 3A. He cited the cove and gulf areas around the harbor which repeatedly show pollution problems and which are close to shellfish breeding areas and listed several other polluted areas which drain into ground water.

Cohasset's share of the cost of the \$12.7 million project would be \$3.9 million; the remainder of the funds would come from federal and state agencies. The cost for a resident in an area to be hooked-up would be \$280 annually, Hintz said. Maintenance and operating costs were estimated at \$150,000.

The Advisory Board recommended both articles. Chairman Patrick Hurley said, "For the town not to go forward would not be responsible. We have no wisdom to add."

The Capital Budget Committee gave the project a low priority. The committee was not convinced, according to Chairman Richard Avery, of the system's benefits and wanted to see it better defined. "A small part of town is being sewerage, yet the whole town is carrying the burden."

Several residents echoed the sentiment that more information was needed and moved for postponement, but Moderator David Place indicated the articles both required a two-thirds vote and that a no vote would accomplish the same result as postponement.

Hobbs responded to the comments by saying, "At some point you have accept some professional competence. On the part of the commissioners, the EPA and state agencies, we feel there is a need. We could very well have a higher authority step in."

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